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well-informed of the basic facts of agriculture, but it is likely to leave him cold. Perhaps I will express just what I mean if I say that the book is too academic.

However, until the perfect textbook is written, Harris and Stewart may justly claim to have made a significant contribution to the "Rural Textbook Series." In the hands of a teacher who knows agriculture and how to teach it, this volume may easily be made the basis for important work in the classroom. Not as a book to be memorized, or conned for an array of facts with no co-ordination, but as a framework upon which the class may build, *Principles of Agronomy* has its place. As its authors suggest, its use should be preceded by a more elementary course, and it should be followed by work in animal husbandry. For the school giving only one course in agriculture, a more elementary text would seem to be desirable.

W. A. FREEHOFF

WAUKESHA, WIS.

*School Hygiene.* By ROBERT A. LYSTER, M.D. 2d ed. Baltimore: Warwick & York, 1915. Pp. viii+388. $1.15.

The notable physical features of this admirable book are its convenient size and practical illustrations. The chapters on lighting and heating, ventilation, and sanitary appliances are unusually clear and adequate. Teachers will find that they discuss these important subjects in a very instructive manner. This is also true of the chapters on school fittings. Methods of examination of the school child are discussed in detail, so that after reading this chapter it will be easy to make an accurate study of the physical characteristics of the pupil. Personal hygiene is carefully presented, and there is some space devoted to mental development, the common ailments of children, accidents, and epidemic diseases. The latter is not handled wholly from the modern viewpoint. In other respects the book is desirable.

JOSEPHINE YOUNG

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*Technique of Play Writing.* By CHARLTON ANDREWS. (The Writer's Library.) Springfield: Home Correspondence School, 1915. Pp. xxix+269. $1.62.

The present text belongs to the great class of books intended to instruct the novice in some one form of literary composition. As such, it has all the negative virtues of its class. It cannot be said that any student who follows out the doctrines of Mr. Andrews' text will go violently wrong. It is more important for probable purchasers to know the equally certain fact that they are unlikely to be violently right. Just as college classes in short-story writing seldom or never produce good short stories, so it is highly improbable that a student of this text will ever write the great American drama. Dramatists have an unfortunate habit of being born, though it is also essential that they be made. The supposition in books of this class is always that if you write by rule you are writing well.

The best part of Mr. Andrews' work is his running criticism on familiar plays. One unfamiliar with the tricks of the stage may very well, after reading the author's comment, witness the performance of "The Witching Hour," the next time he attends it, with new eyes. This part of the text is properly the function of criticism. It is when he gets beyond criticism and attempts to lay down general laws for the fledgling dramatist that the author becomes at once amusing and disappointing. Yet it is exactly here that the novice expects most help. He does not need to be told that the end of the first act of *Lady Windemere's Fan* is a remarkable piece of stage mechanics; very probably he knows it already. What he is looking for is a general recipe for working up suspense. The kind of recipe that he will get from Mr. Andrews may be surmised from the following sample, which pertains to "The Management of Preparation in Plot"—whatever that is:

> 1. Cite as many instances as you can of "preparation" in plays.
> 2. Cite one or two from novels.
> 3. How do the forms differ in the two literary types, if at all?
> 4. Invent two complete "triangle of information" [Shades of Euclid!] situations, giving one in rough outline. . . . .
> 5. Devise the necessary "preparation" for lending effectiveness to any tentative play climaxes you may have in mind.

You can obtain the *Art of Writing Love Letters*, neatly bound, for fifteen cents. The *Technique of Play Writing* will cost you a dollar and a half. Yet love letters written by rule are not noted for their excellence; and it is equally unlikely that plays written according to this formula would be much more valuable.

HOWARD MUMFORD JONES

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*A Practical Elementary Chemistry*. By B. W. McFARLAND. New York: Scribner, 1915. Pp. xvi+462.

This book differs from the current texts in high-school chemistry not in subject-matter, but in its arrangement and method of presentation. The student's laboratory work, according to the author's plan, is made the basis of the theoretical structure of the high-school chemistry. His book may be characterized as a laboratory guide with a chemical lexicon attached to it, which the student is required to consult continually in pursuing references given at the end of each laboratory exercise. The references are not always happily chosen. A student performing his first chemical experiment will derive positive harm, from an educational point of view, in reading in the lexical part of the book that "an acid is a substance that gives hydrogen ions in solution. It is generally sour to the taste and turns blue litmus paper red. It consists of the hydrogen radical joined to any acid radical except O and OH.